

## EMS Safety Bulletin: Safety Stand Down - The First Five Minutes

From the moment the call is dispatched, until the moment that patient contact is made, there are an almost endless series of actions that EMS providers can take to enhance the safety of their crew and fellow responders as well as that of their patients and bystanders.

Take the time this month to focus on the first five minutes of an EMS response, and think about it from multiple perspectives - Chief, Incident Commander, Company Officer, AIC and EMT. Each agency is encouraged to develop drills and training materials to encourage safe actions in the first five minutes.

### *Things to think about on the way to the scene:*

- Consider the information given by the dispatcher, what can you use to prepare for arrival on scene and talk to your partner on the way there – plan your approach
- Identify the type of call, info about caller, location and number of patients, an idea of the severity of their condition(s), and special problems or hazards expected
- Consider driving hazards to such as weather, traffic, road conditions, any need for expediting the call
- Use defensive driving, use warning lights & sirens only if needed, and avoid common driving distractions



### *Things to think about when arriving at the scene:*

- Use safe parking & traffic control practices
  - Consider roadside safety, warning device use, apparatus, lighting, high-visibility clothing, and interagency planning and cooperation
  - Traffic Incident Management (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OEMS/EO/TIM/index.htm> & <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OEMS/EO/TIM/Attachment6.pdf>)
- Take appropriate BSI precautions
  - Basic BSI (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/healthcare-associated-infections-hais/standard-precautions-and-transmission-based-precautions/>)
  - Emerging Infectious Diseases BSI (<http://166.67.66.226/oems/EO/EID.htm>)
- Do a scene size-up and clearly communicate your situation and needs
  - Do not enter an unsafe scene – gunman, fire, hazmat...
  - Assess and send accurate and timely information
- Once you have sent information and requested any assistance required, determine where and how to set up your scene management

Remember that due diligence to safety in the first five minutes is essential to ensure that you have the best chance to protect yourself, your crew and the patients, so take the time to think ahead and make smart decisions from the start.

Sources: OSHA, <http://www.naemt.org>, <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov>, <http://166.67.66.226/oems/EO/EID.htm>

